

# Notes from Upper Rio Grande Basin Water Operations Review Interdisciplinary NEPA Team Meeting; January 11, 2001; 1:00 PM; Corps of Engineers Conference Room, Albuquerque

## *In attendance:*

Ellen Dietrich, SAIC

Darrell Eidson, Corps

Richard Fike, Corps

Don Gallegos, Corps

Susan Goodan, SAIC

Brian Hanson, USFWS

Bill C. Hays, NMGF

Conrad Keyes, Jr., EWRI of ASCE

Russ MacRae, USFWS

Mike Marcus, NMISC/SWCA

Clay Mathers, Corps

Claudia Oakes, NMISC/SWCA

Robert Padilla, USBR

Cynthia Piirto, Corps

Steve Piper, USBR

Gary Rutherford, Corps

Gail Stockton, Corps

Leann Towne, USBR

Julie Tsatsaros, NMED

Gary Watts, NMISC

- ❖ The meeting began with distribution of handouts and maps of the basin.

- The technical teams were asked to plot the locations of primary sets of data they have acquired on the maps.
- Teams completed this as time allowed and gave the maps to Clay Mathers, GIS Technical Team leader, who will compile them and discuss at a later meeting. Location of needed data will also be discussed at a future meeting.



- It was stressed that any of the **information already collected, whether GIS data or other references, must be documented on the archive form** that was distributed. Ellen Dietrich will send an electronic copy of this form to all technical team leaders to forward to their team members by e-mail.

- ❖ The Project Managers briefly discussed their comments on the plans of study developed by each technical team.

- Leann Towne handed out a table that shows the potential overlap of affected resources to be studied by each of the technical teams, based on resources identified in the plans of study. It is possible that different types of data on the same resource would be needed by different teams, but coordination of efforts must be discussed during integration of the plans. A similar table will be developed by the Project Managers for indicators.



- **The next task for Project Managers, by the February ID NEPA Team meeting, will be to incorporate all of the study plan information into the Work Breakdown Structure that is in the Work Plan, including staffing and budget.**
- One issue the Project Managers and ID NEPA Team must address is how data would flow from the URGWOM model to technical teams to GIS. The Pilot GIS Study of Reach 14 data will help demonstrate this and identify problems that will occur during integration of technical team data. It is important for all teams to provide data to this effort ASAP.

- A question raised by a technical team member is how issues and coordination between technical teams will be worked out.
  - The first choice, if something were needed from another team, would be to call the team leader and request it.
  - Another option would be to contact the Project Manager assigned to that team.
  - The technical teams should bring these issues to the Project Managers and discuss at the ID NEPA Team meetings.
  - This coordination is important to ensure that efforts are not duplicated in different technical teams.
- Gail Stockton discussed the need for development of protocol to conduct consultation and coordination. Examples are listed below.
  - The Aquatic Systems and Riparian Technical Teams will work with the USFWS to develop a Biological Assessment and Biological Opinion.



- **Coordination with tribes and pueblos must be addressed in each technical team plan of study.** When the plans of study are integrated, there will be one point of contact with the tribes, instead of having each technical team conduct their own consultation.

- Each tribe has received a letter asking them to designate a point of contact. Two tribes have responded so far. A follow up letter will be sent next week.
- Protocol for consultation may not be the same for every tribe.



- **Revised technical team schedules and budgets must be submitted to the Project Managers within the next two weeks.**

- Alternatives

- In developing plans of study and in technical team meetings, teams should be thinking about what would be the best alternative flow scenarios for their resources.
  - The Aquatic Systems Technical Team is developing general criteria for specific reaches that would be best.



- **Other technical teams should develop criteria to be used to define reasonable alternatives** and send them to the Project managers, present at the next URGWOM Integration/Water Operations Technical Team meeting, or at the next ID NEPA Team meeting.

- The URGWOM Integration/Water Operations Technical Team will be developing the No Action Alternative, which will consist of baseline flow conditions. They will also **develop descriptions of current water operations protocols. This description is needed as soon as possible.**



- Technical teams can refer to the notes from the past two URGWOM Integration/Water Operations Technical Team meetings, on the web site and distributed at this meeting, for information on baseline flows.

- ❖ The majority of the meeting consisted of technical teams breaking into their groups to finalize their plans of study and begin discussing integration.

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❖ Upcoming Technical Team meetings:

- Water Quality—February 12, 8:30 a.m. at USFWS field office, 2105 Osuna, NE in Albuquerque.
- River Geomorphology—January 29, 1:30-3:30 p.m. at the Corps.
- Riparian and Wetland Systems—February 5, 1:00-4:00 p.m. at the Bureau of Reclamation.
- Water Operations—February 1, 1:00-3:30 p.m. at the Corps.
- Aquatic Systems—February 13, 9:00 a.m.-noon at the Corps.
- GIS—January 25, 9:00 a.m. at the Corps.
- Land Use, Socioeconomics, EJ, Recreation, Agriculture—February 8, 9:00 a.m. at the Corps.



- ❖ **The next meeting of the Interdisciplinary NEPA Team will be held on February 8 at 1:00 p.m. at the Corps.**